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City of Columbus Boards Up South Side Drug House Connected to Multiple Shootings

*Property was the scene of repeated gun violence, gang activity, drug trafficking,
overdose fatality*

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that his office secured an emergency court order to shut down a south side property that was the center of several violent incidents, including two large shoot-outs where dozens of rounds of gunfire were exchanged. A months-long investigation by the Columbus Division of Police also obtained significant evidence of narcotics trafficking, as well as the possible involvement of juveniles in drug activity at the premises. Officers conducting surveillance also observed several documented gang members frequenting the premises.

Klein filed a motion for an *ex parte* temporary restraining order in the Franklin County Environmental Court against [896 Ellsworth Avenue](#), which was boarded up earlier today in conjunction with a search warrant executed by the Community Response Team for police zone five.

“There was a disturbing amount of gun violence and gang activity associated with this property, and we’re grateful the court granted our emergency request to shut it down,” said Klein. **“These board-ups bring immediate relief to the neighborhood and are part of our office’s broader strategy to address the underlying causes of crime, to promote economic opportunities for underserved populations, and to provide mental health and addiction services for those who struggle with substance abuse, while supporting significant jail sentences for drug traffickers and other violent offenders.”**

According to court documents, on January 22, 2020, at 3:02 a.m., the ShotSpotter alert system detected five gunshots in the area of the premises. Responding officers recovered shell casings that were similar to those recovered from another shooting that occurred about a mile away three weeks earlier.

On February 19, 2020, narcotics detectives executed a search warrant after previously conducting covert purchases of illegal drugs from the premises. The detectives seized 103.61 grams of cocaine powder, 18.79 grams of crack cocaine, cash, body armor, a .40 caliber handgun, a magazine loader, and several boxes of ammunition.

Soon thereafter, police officials sent the property owner a warning letter detailing the illegal activity occurring at the premises.

On March 19, 2020, officers observed a juvenile female entering and then leaving the house with what they had reason to believe were narcotics in her hands.

On March 21, 2020, officers stopped a vehicle that had just left the premises, finding two firearms and a documented gang member inside the car. At 8:00 a.m. the following morning, police received a ShotSpotter gunshot alert in the area of the premises.

On March 25, 2020, at 1:11 a.m., several males left the premises and drove a short distance before exiting the vehicle and reaching into their waistbands. Moments later, officers in the area heard numerous gunshots and ShotSpotter also detected several shots fired from where the males were located at that time.

On April 10, 2020, a victim died of an overdose of tramadol and fentanyl that occurred at the premises.

On June 9, 2020, officers responded to reports of shots fired. When they arrived, they discovered 26 9mm casings. Witnesses stated that a male standing in the street exchanged gunfire with someone in a silver vehicle, and then ran back to the premises.

On June 20, 2020, police were alerted to 33 shots fired. Responding officers located spent shell casings on the front porch and determined that a neighboring house and a vehicle were struck by gunfire. At least one spent casing was subsequently linked to a previous shooting that had occurred on Brentnell Ave.

On August 28, 2020, officers conducting surveillance attempted a traffic stop of a vehicle that had left the premises. The driver refused to stop and sped away. He eventually abandoned the vehicle and ran from officers on foot. Officers eventually caught the driver and found that the vehicle was stolen.

On September 8, 2020, narcotics detectives made a covert purchase of “twenty of hard” of crack cocaine.

“We would like to thank the Columbus Division of Police for their thorough investigation into the ongoing violence and drug trafficking occurring at this property,” said Assistant City Attorney Sarah Pomeroy. “Along with the alarming amount of gun violence, it was particularly distressing to know that juveniles were possibly involved with the drug activity.”

A hearing for preliminary and permanent injunctive relief against the property is scheduled for Thursday, September 24, 2020 starting at 1:00 p.m.

If the property is ultimately declared to be a statutorily defined public nuisance, state law grants the court authority to order the premises shut down for up to one year. The owner also would be permanently enjoined from “conducting, maintaining, using, occupying, or in any way permitting” a public nuisance anywhere in Franklin County.

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